FACE TO FACE, VIKTOR GUSTAVSSON

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The KZ World Championship proclaims Viktor Gustavsson on CRG/Tm

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Viktor Gustavsson makes the headlines in 2020 by winning the European KZ2 (CL/Tm) title. The decision to leave the winning chassis up to that time, namely the Birel Art, to switch to the CRG chassis, surprised everyone except those like Giancarlo Tinini who, among many other talents, know how to recognize talented drivers.

Before celebrating the victory at the Le Mans world championship, Gustavsson's preparation should be considered, as his past also and above all his commitment in the OK Senior category, which gave a big hand to the Swede and to CRG itself to align the driver's characteristics to that of the vehicle, an operation that turned out to be apt and allowed Gustafsson to interpret the CRG's potential at its best and deservedly conquer the KZ world championship.

As for the titular appointment in Le Mans, Gustavsson's path was impeccable right from practice, and then allowed himself a surprising attack against Puhakka, the driver to beat in this edition on French soil. After all the weekend in the wake of Puhakka, who proved to be going faster even than the CRG driver, but one crucial moment revealed all. An astute move, as it was decisive, in crossing trajectories after a few corners on the very first lap of an endless final. A move that ko-ed ice man Puhakka, dreams of glory receding from then on.

Gustafsson was equally good in the continuation, albeit forced not to make one single mistake, the same precision that today launches him into the Olympus of Karting and CRG called to build a new cycle as was that of Thonon and lastly of De Conto.

Viktor, you are World Champion, how do you feel?
Obviously I'm over the moon, and so is the team. It's been a hard year for me and for the team. I have struggled in many ways, with stress and started slipping into eating disorders. To pull myself back from that and to win the biggest race of the year was special. But I'm still the same person and nothing can change that. I'm just happy for the team and everyone working for me in order to be here.

The weekend at Le Mans was really intense, when did you realize you had a chance to win it?
I came into the race not really knowing what to expect, end of Thursday practice I was really confident about the material. I just had to make a spotless race. When you feel like that you go into another dimension. Everything narrows down and I was laser focus. You feel like you're on another planet, like nothing can get you off balance. I think the tricky conditions made it difficult for everyone; we just had to make the right decision as a team at the right time in order to set us up nicely for the final on Sunday afternoon.

You bet on CRG after being in an equally winning team; what made you make the initial choice?
I wanted a new challenge. I got in contact with CRG and I felt like I could make a difference. Bring back CRG to where they belong. For me, it wasn't about winning every race, but to work as a team and slowly get us back to the front. For me, that was a challenge I wanted. Therefore, I took the step to CRG and I'm happy I did. We really came together that weekend and everyone worked together. Obviously, the road wasn't easy to get there but all the hard work finally paid off. It wasn't only me in the front either! Everyone from the team was very fast and performed very well. Which shows how competitive we are. Also, Galiffa made an extremely good job; they never disappoint, I've been with them for nearly 3 years now and they just keep impressing me with their hard work and determination.

Do you think it's possible to have opened a new CRG winning cycle? What do you think?
Of course! From the Italian Championship the week before where Gabriel Gomez took the win in the OK class that really switched things, we got that feeling of winning again as a team. That made us sharp and ready. Hopefully, that momentum can continue for the rest of the season and carry on for many years to come! I think everyone can agree that it has been a difficult few years for CRG but I truly believe we will come back to the fantastic shape they have been in previous years.

What's in your future now?
Like I said, I'm still the same person. There has been a big pressure from myself lifted off my shoulders. And I'm thankful for that. I'm hoping to continue this momentum with CRG coming into the next season. The world continues and we keep on working. Just need to thank everyone behind the scenes for all their hard work, they know who they are. Without them, I wouldn't be here. So thank you!